

collectors to keep in touch with what's going on in the stamp world, with fun quizzes and activities to do at home, information, stories, etc., in a newsletter especially written for children. Together with the website, www.planetstamp.co.uk it completes a package of support for young collectors whether or not they are members of a stamp club. Membership of Kidstamps is free. Contact the NYSC for application forms for your members.



Need More Help with Your Club?

That's the next leaflet in our series - full of helpful contacts and an order form for discounted reference books available from the British Philatelic Trust.

The other leaflets in this series are -

- 'How to Start Your Stamp Club'
- 'Understanding the Basics of Stamp Collecting'
- 'Safeguarding Your Members'
- 'Need More Help With Your Club?'



developing your club





“Every successful club has rules”

Developing Your Club

Club Rules

Every successful club has rules! Hold a meeting to discuss the simple running of your club. Here are a few ideas for discussion-

- Suggest the obvious: clean hands, no food or drink, always use tweezers, do not touch other people’s stamps, no money transactions between children (see ‘Guidelines for Swapping’).
- Discuss the structure of the club: do you want a formal structure, with a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.? (this may be more suitable for older children). If so, what will they do and how long will they hold the position? You can ask for volunteers or hold an election.
- Discuss the annual subscription and meeting fees.

Point System

This is a good way of encouraging participation and rewarding achievement by the members. Points can be awarded for attendance, good behaviour, initiative (such as bringing along an item of interest and talking about it), for projects, competitions, or suggested activities to do at home.

At the end of each term the points can be totalled and used in a club auction (see ‘Holding an Auction’), or as a basis for a prize-giving. If you run a school club, the Head Teacher might present the prizes at Assembly. Alternatively, if your club is based elsewhere, you might hold an Awards Meeting and invite the parents.

Club Newsletter

This may not always be practical for a club leader to organise, especially if you are a busy teacher! However it is an important method of keeping parents informed, and can be a useful educational tool if you get the children to write their own newsletter once each term. It will also serve to keep children who cannot attend every meeting informed of the club’s activities. (Also points can be awarded for contributions.)

A fair swap would be for stamps in good condition adding up to approximately the same value (eg: one stamp catalogued at £1 and one at £1.50 would be a fair swap for one catalogued at £2).

It is most important that the club leader supervises swapping and that a close eye is kept on older or more knowledgeable members. Ensure that everything is fair, and if possible encourage the older members to be more generous in swapping with younger or newer members.

The most important thing to emphasise is that both members must be happy about the exchange, and to encourage the children to ask for help from the club organiser if they are uncertain about any swap.

Further Help for Stamp Active Members

Information about the Stamp Active programme is available from the SAN (Stamp Active Network) and the British Philatelic Trust. As a member of Stamp Active you will receive three times each year a bulletin with news from Stamp Active clubs, further activity sheets and ideas for your club, quizzes and plus details of national competitions your members (or your club as a whole) can enter.

Stamp Active is all about sharing the fun of collecting stamps. Your contributions to the newsletter are welcome, and your reports on activities popular with your club members will help other club organisers. Email or write to us at SAN with details about your club, its activities and events.

Kidstamps

This programme (also run by the SAN) is an ideal way for young



“Stamp Active is all about sharing the fun of collecting stamps”



“Ensure that everything is fair”

Club Shop

The club may be able to purchase at favourable discounts from a local stamp dealer items such as packets of stamps, hinges, albums, etc. The Philatelic Traders’ Society and SAN can help with the names of local reputable dealers. Retail outlets for stamp accessories and catalogues are listed in the leaflets ‘Understanding the Basics of Stamp Collecting’ and ‘Need More Help with Your Club?’.

These can be sold to the club members at a small profit. Do check with the Head Teacher if your club is based at school that this does not contravene any regulations.

Items for sale can be listed in the newsletter, thereby notifying parents of what is available.

Guidelines for Swapping

Every child likes to swap, whether it is in the playground or at the stamp club. To avoid any misunderstandings or upsets during your meetings it is advisable to adopt a set of ‘Swapping Rules’. Here are a few ideas -

- Members should sit in small groups or pairs.
- Members should put away in their bags those stamps that they do not want to swap.
- Only stamps that are duplicates or are unwanted should be swapped.
- Members should be reminded that stamps that are torn, creased, thinned or heavily postmarked, or having missing perforations or pen lines on them cannot be swapped and are not collectable.
- Swapping can be done on a ‘one for one’ basis, such as a definitive issue for another definitive, a large commemorative stamp for another large commemorative, a first day cover for another first day cover, etc.
- Swapping can also be done on a value basis. This is recommended with stamps with a catalogue value of over 50p. Members should look up the value of the stamps in the catalogue.

The following are examples of material which might be included in a club newsletter -

- Title banner
- General meeting details
- Details about future meetings
- Review of the previous meeting
- Columns or contributions by members
- Question and answer section
- Members’ news
- New Issues information
- Forthcoming stamp fairs in your area
- Competitions members can enter
- A swap page
- Articles taken from other stamp magazines
- Local Post Office news

Ideas for Your First Few Meetings

At your first meeting, some explanation of the terminology of stamp collecting is a good idea. Bring along some examples of albums, some stamps and tweezers. For guidelines on the terminology and how to look after stamps, see the leaflet ‘Understanding the Basics of Stamp Collecting’. This will explain how to float and soak stamps, how to mount them, and what to collect.

Other suggestions are given in the leaflet ‘How to Start Your Stamp Club’ (see ‘Your First Proper Meeting’). If you have a catalogue, look up some stamps you have brought to the meeting as an example of how to use the catalogue. Ask the children to bring along some of their stamps if they already collect, so that they are actively involved in the meeting.

You can discuss ideas of what to collect - thematics will probably be most suitable for beginners.



“Invite members to bring along their albums”

“Try holding a competition within your club”

What Next?

Once your club has got off the ground you might want to try some slightly more ambitious ventures. Here are some ideas -

- Talks by local collectors. Contact your local stamp club and see ‘Need More Help with Your Club?’ leaflet.
- Exhibitions and fairs - is there one taking place near you? The NYSC and website www.planetstamp.co.uk have details.
- Run your own stamp auction.
- Invite a stamp dealer to visit your club.
- Hold a Parents or Open Evening.
- Visit your local Post Office or Sorting Office.

Competitions

Try holding a competition within your club, awarding points for correct answers. This is a good way of getting members to demonstrate their newly-acquired skills. Types of competition can be -

- Stamp Quiz.
- Show a Page (or two or three!). Invite members to bring along some album pages and invite a parent or teacher to award points for neatness, information, etc. The children can talk about them, thereby developing public-speaking skills and confidence.

There are also competitions held at Federation and National level for clubs to enter. Details are available from the NYSC and the British Philatelic Trust. One or two meetings can be devoted to preparing the club entry with all members contributing their stamps, writing-up skills, etc.

Holding an Auction

It is important to have the lots prepared in good time. At the beginning of the year select 20 - 30 desirable items, such as albums, attractive sets of stamps, stockbooks and other accessories, catalogues, etc. Tell the members that

they will be able to use their points to bid for each lot (it is important that all members have some points to use for this purpose), and this will encourage their active participation in the meetings leading up to the auction. Publicise the auction in your newsletter to encourage attendance and invite the parents to come and join in the fun!

The auctioneer should ask for bids on each lot, perhaps suggesting a starting bid of 5 points. It is also a good idea to set a maximum bid level, depending upon the number of points most children have attained during the term.

Buying and Selling Stamps at Club Meetings

Whether this is a good idea must be decided by the club organiser. In general it is safer not to allow money transactions between members.

If you do decide to allow buying and selling, the safest means is by way of a sales table. Members should present surplus or duplicate stamps in packets or mounted on cardboard enclosed in cellophane or a plastic bag for protection. Window envelopes are also ideal. Items should be priced individually, with members preparing a named checklist of all contents. Appoint a table supervisor who can check that the list matches the packets before displaying them for sale on the table. Ensure you have a small float for supplying change for purchases.

At the end of the meeting allow sufficient time for the sales to be totalled and commission (say 10%) to be deducted for club funds. The balance should then be paid to the respective club members and any unsold packets returned to them.

There are a number of other, controlled ways in which trading can take place for the benefit of both members and club. These are outlined below.



“Every child loves to swap”

